

# THE CASE FOR ABOLISHING ROTC

THE CASE FOR ABOLISHING R.O.T.C. was thrown together rather haphazardly from fragments of earlier leaflets. In our struggle to get it out before a faculty meeting, we had no time for stylistic revisions or even careful typing. As things turned out, the pamphlet may have had some minimal effect in causing the faculty to adopt the SFAC proposal, which we did not support, but which was superior to some of the other alternatives.

It soon became evident that we had not analyzed carefully enough the role of the Corporation (Board of Trustees) relative to the vote of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The Corporation rigorously limited the competence of the faculty to purely 'academic' matters, declared its firm intention to retain ROTC, and opened negotiations to that purpose with the Pentagon. The Faculty acquiesced, but SDS acted for total abolition by seizing the administration building. Under pressure of the ensuing student strike, the Faculty voted to enforce strict extra-curricularity on ROTC, and the Corporation was forced to go along.

While there is still some confusion about the precise details of how the three ROTC units will be phased out, and despite the Faculty's groveling insistence that their move against ROTC was not 'politically' motivated, it is clear that we have abolished ROTC at Harvard. The Army will terminate its program by June 1970, and the Air Force by June 1971. The Navy has not yet announced its decision, but has accepted no new freshmen into its program. In order to remain at Harvard even for the two years the Faculty allowed for phasing out the programs, some arrangement has to be found for giving Faculty appointments to military instructors. Although the Corporation and Faculty are eager to do so, they will be constrained by the now-overwhelming student consensus against ROTC.

The elimination of ROTC units on the few Ivy League campuses yet affected does no serious damage to the procurement of military officers, although the anti-ROTC campaign has also been useful in raising anti-imperialist consciousness among students and even a few faculty members. A campaign against ROTC on hundreds of campuses, however, has the potential of seriously damaging the orderly production of military officers for imperialist wars, and, if nothing else, expose to thousands of students the myriad ties between the universities and U.S. imperialism. At Harvard we'll doubtless keep even a lame-duck ROTC under pressure, but should move on to hampering counter-insurgency research (domestic and foreign) which is one of Harvard's special services to the Empire.

"AS HARVARD GOES SO GOES THE ARMY ROTC PROGRAM"

— Col. Pell —

The Harvard Faculty faces several proposals concerning the future of ROTC at Harvard and perhaps, as Col. Pell indicates, in the nation. Only one proposal, that of Professor Hilary Putnam, responds adequately to the need to abolish ROTC. The other proposals, as will be argued below, neither intend nor will effect such abolition. To facilitate clear discussion of the political choices the faculty must make, we have tried to sketch the main arguments for abolishing ROTC—arguments addressed to the nature of American foreign and domestic policy, and arguments addressed to the nature of the university.

# ABOLISH ROTC



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courses be directed by persons holding a regular academic appointment.

This proposal is particularly disingenuous. Its acceptance would affect ROTC very little, since its criteria would be met by the CEP or Huntington proposals. Its chief effect would seem to be to discourage student-run / student-initiated courses, like Soc Rel 148 (as would section 3b of the CEP proposal). One is reminded here of the historical side-effects of the Fourteenth Amendment, i.e., to give corporations the legal status of persons. The Bailyn-Handlin proposal is obviously a Trojan horse.

## SUMMARY

1) The SFAC proposal would not abolish ROTC. Its operative clauses might force the re-negotiation of ROTC contracts, and perhaps even a minor change in the law. But the SFAC proposal does not sever the contractual relationship between Harvard University and the Department of Defense *for the production of military officers*. In addition, it does not oppose extracurricular status for ROTC. Since it confines its objections to the liberal issues of external control and academic content, it leaves the door open for more "constructive" proposals for reforms in the ROTC programs that would actually consolidate their position at Harvard.

2) The CEP and Huntington proposals would strengthen ROTC's position at Harvard. The modernization of ROTC along these lines would make the production of military officers for imperialist wars merely more "efficient."

3) Only the proposal by Professor Putnam would effectively abolish ROTC at Harvard. The political issue at stake can be posed as follows:

Should Harvard University, in the context of current American domestic and foreign policies, have a contract with the Department of Defense to provide for the production of officers for the U.S. armed forces?

It should not. Military training is sometimes appropriate on the University campus. This is a judgment men must make with full awareness of the world in which they live, with full awareness of the responsibility they owe that world. In historical situations like World War II, it was right for Harvard to produce military officers. It is not right today. There is no more obligation for Harvard University to provide professional training for military officers at this time in history than to provide training for *any* other agency of counter-revolutionary aggression.

## I THE ABOLITIONIST POSITION

### AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE RIGHT TO REVOLT

Vietnam not an Isolated Mistake  
A war against the people  
Oppression and the Right to Revolt  
Use of the Military in a Wider Scheme

### IMPORTANCE OF ROTC TO PURSUIT OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

ROTC: The Main Source of Officers  
No Alternative to ROTC  
Civilian Elites and the Army  
Attack on ROTC an Attack on Imperialist Policy

## II ROTC AND THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

### SOURCES OF OPPOSITION TO THE "ANTI-ROTC" CAMPAIGN

Defenders of Harvard's Political Commitments  
The Attack on Harvard's Political Commitments  
The Myth of Neutrality and the Resulting Alliance

### EFFECTS OF THE UNIVERSITY NEUTRALITY MYTH

Attempts to Limit Scope of ROTC Issue  
"Civil Liberties" Arguments  
How Neutral Are the "Proper Channels" ?  
Punishment and Neutrality  
No Student Power Issue

### REALIGNING THE UNIVERSITY

## III ANALYSIS OF THE ROTC PROPOSALS

The Putnam Proposal  
The SFAC Proposal  
The CEP and Huntington Proposals  
The Lipset Proposal  
The Bailyn-Handlin Proposal (A Trojan Horse)  
Summary



## I THE ABOLITIONIST POSITION

### AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE RIGHT TO REVOLT

The abolition of ROTC on the Harvard campus is imperative not because ROTC maintains low academic standards, but because the policies its men defend and the interests they serve are fundamentally wrong.

Some people think that American policy in Vietnam has been misguided (and perhaps even immoral in the use of napalm, etc.), but now America's leaders are slowly becoming "reasonable." We disagree. We think that the Vietnam policy has always been harmoniously integrated in the larger pattern of the American government's aims and interests around the world and here at home.

#### VIETNAM IS NOT AN ISOLATED MISTAKE

Prima facie evidence for the rational nature of U.S. Vietnam commitments may be found in the comments of American statesmen. As Richard Goodwin, a former aide to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and later a McCarthy campaign assistant put it, "We made these decisions to intervene, because in the judgements of the Presidents, American power and interests demanded it." (N.Y. Times, 2/5/67). In the words of the former Ambassador to Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge, "Vietnam does not exist in a geographical vacuum— from it large storehouses of wealth and population can be influenced and undermined." (Globe, 2/28/65). Senator Gale McGee of Wyoming formulated American intentions even more succinctly. "That empire in Southeast Asia is the last major resource area outside the control of any of the major powers on the globe. . . I believe that the conditions of the Vietnamese people, and the direction in which their future may be going, are at this stage secondary, not primary." Senator McGee expresses very clearly the antagonism between America's interests (the interests of American "free enterprise") and those of the Vietnamese people. To believe that American policy has been merely misguided, one must focus only on the "Americanization" of the war since 1965, the huge build-up of American troops and the massive use by the U.S. Army of civilian bombing. But as Mr. Goodwin, a dove, has indicated, the policy goes back to President Kennedy and before Kennedy, to Eisenhower and Truman. Having defeated Japanese imperialism, the U.S. government footed the bill for French colonialism against the Viet Minh. When the French were defeated, the American government installed the Diem dictatorship, trained Diem's armies, and aided his attempts to undo the redistribution of land that had been carried out by the Viet Minh. Thus the

## CEP AND HUNTINGTON PROPOSALS

Both these proposals are intended to reform the ROTC programs to meet liberal objections about external control and academic quality. The CEP proposal would allow degree credit for courses in military, air, and naval science, that are sponsored by an academic department, division, or committee, and directed by a person whose appointment was recommended by a department, division, or committee. The Huntington Proposal is similar, but would create, in addition, a "standing committee on military studies" to approve military courses and recommend faculty appointments of Army officers.

For many years, scholars sympathetic to the goals of ROTC have been recommending similar reforms to these proposals. (In this context, see Gene M. Lyons and John W. Masland, *Education and Military Leadership: A Study of ROTC*, Princeton University Press [1959].) Faculty acceptance of the CEP and/or Huntington proposals would serve only to make ROTC appear more legitimate and academically respectable.

### THE LIPSET PROPOSAL

Professor Lipset calls for an advisory referendum of Harvard College undergraduates on the question, "Whether ROTC shall retain its special status (academic credit for courses, Corporation appointments for instructors, and free, permanent use of University buildings) or become a voluntary extra-curricular activity."

It is difficult to see how Professor Lipset can call a referendum of *Harvard College undergraduates* "a mechanism for determining the opinion of the student population as a whole." In addition, his formulation excludes the position of at least the 1100 students who signed the Abolish-ROTC / No Punishment statement (*Crimson*, 1/14/69). His alternative, that ROTC become a "voluntary extra-curricular activity," is both disingenuous and a firm avoidance of the real issue. It is disingenuous to label as "voluntary" programs whose quotas are largely filled under the threat of the Draft. He avoids (for reasons others may plumb) the central issue, which is not the mechanism of recruitment the U.S. Army uses, but rather the justice of the purposes for which the Army is used at home and abroad.

### THE BAILYN-HANDLIN PROPOSAL (A TROJAN HORSE)

The proposal by Professors Bailyn and Handlin would provide that the content of all courses in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences be "entirely academic in purpose" and be determined entirely by members (including 50 administrators, apparently) of the Faculty, and that all

sor Huntington. This is the crucial point to see, for it starkly demonstrates the weakness of SFAC's reasons and proposal for fighting ROTC

The withdrawal of academic credit from ROTC would apply to courses presently taught by the Department of Military Science, e.g., Military Science I-II ("U.S. Defense Establishment"). The Government department could well give a comparable course that would be required of ROTC cadets, such as Government 159 ("National Security Policy"). Perhaps half of the ROTC courses cover areas that could easily be incorporated into academic departments without sacrificing their function of indoctrinating reactionary values. But academic credit in any case is a minor issue. Most ROTC cadets do not receive course credit (49 of 149 do), and a recent survey indicates that only 4% of ROTC cadets would leave the program if academic credit were withdrawn.

The fact that two-thirds of the Army ROTC enrollment at Harvard consists of law (graduate) students and the fact that only 20% of the undergraduate students actually use ROTC for degree credit make the question of academic credit essentially irrelevant. (Position paper of Army ROTC Instructor Group, 4 December 1968.)

A clearer statement of our argument could not be given.

The withdrawal of descriptions of ROTC courses from the course catalogue would refer only to the courses presently taught. As indicated earlier, the subjects could be taught in other departments, and their listing as such could be interpreted to satisfy the legal requirement that ROTC courses be included in the curriculum.

There seems to be little doubt that our spiralling military budget permits the lease of University space. The cessation of free allocation of space in University buildings is, therefore, a trivial move.

The termination of faculty appointments for ROTC instructors contravenes a law which requires that Service Officers assigned to ROTC duty be given faculty status. However, even if this provision were not taken care of by a "standing committee on military studies" (see Huntington Proposal, below), the law could be amended.

In Col. Pell's considered judgment, finally, "the withdrawal of academic credit for Army ROTC courses at Harvard, would not, of itself, cause the Department of the Army to withdraw the ROTC unit from Harvard. Better, in my judgment, is the action by the faculty to cause a thorough reappraisal of the ROTC curricula, within the framework of flexibility available to each service, that would make the ROTC courses of acceptable quality."

Vietnam war has been an American enterprise from its inception. What is new about the war since 1965 is not the American involvement; it is the strength and unity of the Vietnamese people fighting back against American interests.

#### A WAR AGAINST THE PEOPLE

In the present phase of the war, the U.S. has committed spectacular moral crimes. During the Tet offensive it almost totally destroyed major cities (Ben Tre—a city of 35,000—was 85% destroyed by U.S. bombing during the Tet offensive - *Globe*, 2/8/68). In January 1967, the U.S. Army razed the village of Ben Suc and transferred its inhabitants to a refugee camp where peasants could be counted as 'votes' for the Ky-Thieu 'democracy'. In findings on 'civilian casualty and refugee problems in South Vietnam' the Senate Judiciary Committee states that before the Tet offensive, three to four million persons in South Vietnam were refugees (one-fourth of the population). As the report puts it, "The majority of refugees interviewed claimed they were either deposited in camp by the Americans or fled to camps in fear of American airplanes and artillery." Unable to win people away from the NLF by social programs, the U.S. government has used massive and spectacular violence to drive the peasants from NLF-controlled areas.

#### OPPRESSION AND THE RIGHT TO REVOLT

But these overt acts of aggression should not be allowed to obscure the quiet violence imposed by the landlords and American domination in the early stages of the war. This domination meant abject poverty for most of the Vietnamese people. Absentee landlords through their retainers in the countryside forced the peasants to pay 50 to 60% of their crop in rent alone (i.e. not counting usury or taxes). To give an indication of concentration of land ownership, 6300 landlords—2% of the rural population—owned 45% of the land. Continued life on the edge of starvation, continued brutality and pressure from landlord bullies and local police to get in the rent and taxes—these were the conditions of peasant existence which the U.S. government attempted to shore up in Vietnam. These are not unusual conditions—they exist in other countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

It is this quiet violence—the violence of age-long oppression backed up by American aid and military force—which drives the peoples of the third world into revolt against the landlords and their allies: American Business. To maintain this violence, the U.S. has set up military dictatorships in Thailand, the Congo, Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala, Iran—to name but a handful. It is this quiet violence, quiet



because Americans do not hear the rape, the anguish, which renders popular rebellions just, and the spectacular force used by their oppressors unjust.

*A man is poor  
Ever thinner, ever blacker,  
Goes to borrow fifty coins,  
Is asked a hundred in return,  
Turns to go,  
Knows he's taken for a thief;  
A man is rich  
Ever fatter, ever whiter,  
Goes to borrow fifty pieces,  
Has a hundred pressed upon him,  
Turns to go,  
Is urged to stay and drink.*

(Shantung chant from pre-revolutionary  
China--Hinton, FANSHEN, p.46)

#### USE OF THE MILITARY IN A WIDER SCHEME

A large part of the U.S. armed forces is fighting in Vietnam: as of December 31, 1967, of 1,165,000 U.S. troops stationed in foreign countries, 486,600 were in Vietnam. In many other countries, however, the U.S. supports governments which keep the vast majority of the people in abject poverty while granting generous concessions to U.S. businessmen and permitting the U.S. to establish military bases on their territory. In these countries, the U.S. military either maintains a presence or trains and equips the indigenous army to put down its own people.

Consider Guatemala: 2% of the people own 80% of the land, about 72% of the population is illiterate, and over 50% of the people suffer from malnutrition. According to a N.Y. Times report, the right-wing extremist group, the Mano Blanca, whose members are commissioned by the U.S.-supported Guatemalan Army, has assassinated between one and three thousand people in the past year. The victims were usually social reformers or revolutionaries. By 1966, the U.S. had stationed one-thousand military personnel in Guatemala and supplied napalm to Guatemalan pilots for use against guerillas.

In Greece, a country in which the U.S. has supported right-wing political factions since World War II, the present junta came into power by activating a 1958 NATO contingency plan which was intended to 'save Greece from communism.'

In Thailand, at least 38,000 U.S. troops participate by attempting to suppress a peasant revolution similar to that of the Vietnamese, while defending the Kittachorn dictatorship.

### III ANALYSIS OF THE ROTC PROPOSALS

#### THE PUTNAM PROPOSAL

The Army ROTC *Memorandum* to the CEP challenged the Harvard Faculty "to take a bold position in support of an unpopular but totally logical and just issue now confronting the academic community nationwide," and called upon Harvard to demonstrate "its traditional role of national leadership." We ask the Harvard Faculty to take up this challenge by abolishing ROTC! Only the proposal by Professor Putnam would effectively accomplish the abolition of ROTC

The essential points of Professor Putnam's proposal are:

- 1) that ROTC have no access to University facilities on any basis;
- 2) that there be no contractual relation between Harvard University and the U.S. Army for the training of officers at Harvard on a curricular or extra-curricular basis;
- 3) that students who are currently receiving ROTC scholarships be given equivalent Harvard University scholarships.

An analysis of the other proposals made to the Faculty regarding ROTC will demonstrate that they either leave the functioning of ROTC essentially intact, or actually serve to bolster its position at Harvard.

#### THE SFAC PROPOSAL

This proposal would withdraw academic credit from ROTC courses, terminate Faculty appointments for ROTC instructors, and cease the *free* allocation of space to ROTC in University buildings. The reasons given for these actions are that the ROTC program is externally controlled by the Department of Defense, and hence, inconsistent with the autonomy of the University, and that ROTC courses are pre-professional in content and hence, not appropriate to a liberal arts curriculum.

The SFAC arguments are *not* directed against the *extra-curricular* perpetuation of military training at Harvard and do *not* call for the abrogation of the contract between Harvard University and the Department of Defense to provide officers for the armed forces. The objections to the present form of ROTC which the SFAC proposal raises can be answered by proposals to *reform the ROTC program in ways that would strengthen it--proposals like those of the CEP and Profes-*

The military supervision of the Bay of Pigs invasion and the invasion of the Dominican Republic are 'neighborly' examples further documenting the claim that a central role of the U.S. military is the implementation of imperialist policies.

The American military has been deemed necessary for suppressing popular uprisings (e.g. Watts, Newark, Detroit, Wilmington) and mass anti-war demonstrations (e.g. Chicago) at home. In Wilmington, Delaware, National Guardsmen were still on duty nine months after the original rebellion.

#### IMPORTANCE OF ROTC TO U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

The case has been argued that the central role of the American military is to implement a systematic, long-standing policy of securing world-wide markets open to American investments and trade. This aim implies installing and supporting reactionary governments and suppressing popular revolts. The case for abolishing ROTC rests on evidence that ROTC is essential to the smooth functioning of the American military in the pursuit of these policies in Vietnam and elsewhere.

#### ROTC: THE MAIN SOURCE OF OFFICERS

ROTC provides a most essential function of the American military: it supplies the necessary officers. By Col. Pell's calculations

About 45% of all Army officers currently on active duty are ROTC graduates; 65% of our first lieutenants and 85% of our second lieutenants come from the ROTC program.

The N.Y. Times (5 January, 1969, p.64) corroborates these figures. ROTC supplies 50% Army, 35% Navy, and 30% Air Force officers. As Col. Pell earnestly points out,

Today, reliance upon colleges and universities for officers is greater than ever. For example, the 1968 graduating classes contained over 11,000 newly commissioned officers who, as they enter the ranks of the Active Army, will fill 85% of the required annual input needed to provide the junior leaders for today's troop units. More than 1100 of these young men will become career officers to furnish the hardcore leadership for the future. It is very evident that *the present mission of ROTC is the production of officers*, not merely to expose students to military training. (Ital. added).

The student power issue can only sidetrack political issues into further procedural matters. The only power the anti-ROTC campaign can acquire is that which derives from building a strong student movement which understands the ROTC issue and can eventually destroy ROTC. The belief of the abolish-ROTC campaign is that through intensive discussion it can win substantial support for its position and achieve its aim. This belief has led the campaign to pursue such support—not, however, to pursue positions on special committees.

#### REALIGNING THE UNIVERSITY

Several effects have been traced of an unfortunate alliance of those actively favoring current University policies and those upholding a misapplied ideal of university neutrality. It may be clear by now that correct application of that ideology of neutrality would lead to an alliance with those who seek abolition of ROTC. But as has also been pointed out, the ideal of neutrality is itself highly questionable. Most of those who seek to fight current University practices do not seek neutrality but a realignment of the University with the interests of the people of America and the world, not with their rulers and oppressors. Concerning this central question, of alignment with corporations and rulers or with the people, there can really be no neutrality.

This is so because universities are economically-controlled institutions with limited resources. They live in an economic world. Decisions must always be made about who is to be hired and fired, what research will be done, what training must be provided, and who will get the funding necessary to research and train. These decisions are political decisions. Currently they are made by the external institutions—government and private—that control university funding. They are made by men who were themselves trained in universities under similar control. That these men follow reactionary models is clear. It is in the light of these factors that Harvard's claims to public service must be scrutinized, evaluated. Who does Harvard really serve? Who should Harvard really serve? And who does ROTC really serve?

Today, the University serves corporate and governmental interests, not the interests of the people at large. Many faculty members and administrators are undoubtedly sincere in their belief that this constitutes genuine "public service." That many University policies are against the interests of the peoples of the world bespeaks the dangers of that liberal ideology.



### NO ALTERNATIVE TO ROTC

Still, the question might linger, will abolition of ROTC effectively show the operation of an imperialist policy? Col. Pell notes parenthetically,

Let it be understood beyond question that there is at present no acceptable alternative source of junior officer leadership if ROTC is driven from the college campus.

Pell also has a strategic aim in view:

The anti-ROTC extremists apparently do not accept the criticality of ROTC to our defense establishment. They persist in the notion that the armed forces will continue to exist and perform their function, somehow, without ROTC. The blunt truth is that Officer Candidate School (OCS) programs are not attractive to college graduates unless there is extreme pressure from the draft.

Thus, a widespread anti-ROTC movement would have the desired effect. Even with considerable effort to expand OCS, which now contributes 2300 officers per year, and West Point, which now contributes 550, the short-term result would be to dry up the supply of officers for the military. The abolition of ROTC would make it more difficult to continue the Vietnam War or initiate similar wars.

### CIVILIAN ELITES AND THE ARMY

But doesn't the influx of educated men into junior officer positions make a basic difference in the politics of the army? We think not. In the first place, foreign policy is made by civilians. The top military officers exert some influence on the choice of specific tactics, but the counterrevolutionary character of American foreign policy is not the result of militarism. The ROTC program (and the argument about 'intelligence') is based on class prejudice and the perpetuation of the inequalities of American society within the army. As Col. Pell puts it,

The armed forces simply cannot function without an officers corps comprised largely of college graduates. Who is prepared to trust their sons—let alone the nation's destiny—Equally disturbing (as idealistic young Americans' ruining their lives by fleeing the country to avoid the draft) must be the knowledge that there are brilliant young Harvard men with God-given leadership abilities who seem content to waste two years of their life by allowing themselves to be drafted to serve as a private.

contract between Harvard and Army ROTC, the current program of instruction, and a revised curriculum concept).

The entire package of documents was addressed not only to the CEP, but to "Other Harvard Administration and Faculty Leaders" (specifically: President Pusey, nine Deans, thirty Department chairmen). It is of course perfectly within the rights of the Army ROTC Instructor Group to persuade whomever they please. It is disturbing, however, that the recipients of these documents chose to keep it out of the hands of Harvard students and faculty at large, when the most superficial examination of its contents would reveal that they included factual material necessary for an informed decision about ROTC. This kind of secrecy is intolerable, especially from men who claim to seek an academic community that places a premium upon rational choice based on knowledge of the relevant facts. Surely a neutral administration would have sought to make this information available. It was not until opponents of ROTC discovered a copy, more than one month after it was released, that its contents were publicized. Indeed, if the Harvard Faculty had been able to meet and decide on the ROTC issue on 12 December, most faculty members would have been acting in ignorance of many important facts, particularly about the relation of ROTC to the armed forces.

### PUNISHMENT AND NEUTRALITY

The Administration and Faculty found themselves in substantial agreement that punishment was the appropriate response to the Paine Hall sit-in. The liberal misconception of the actual political environment at Harvard leads to the view that even a mild confrontation, even one which has the intention and effect of provoking discussion, is a violation of community procedures. The punishment, however, is an intimidation of those who seek to change university practices. It is a further confirmation of the claim that the community fails to match its ideal self-image of neutrality. It will suppress those who actively seek change, unless they are strong enough to resist such suppression.

### NO STUDENT POWER ISSUE

Yet another result of the dominant liberal ideology is the attempt to construe the anti-ROTC fight as a fight about student power. This seriously distorts the content of the Paine Hall sit-in. The demonstrators claimed only the right to attend *that specific* faculty meeting on an issue of great public importance, not the general right to attend all faculty meetings.